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SUBJECT: MCNS APPROVES SECURITY MEASURES, DISCUSSES UNSCR
REVIEW

REF: BAGHDAD 1920

Classified By: Ambassador Khalilzad for reasons 1.4(a), (b), and (d).

11. (S//REL GBR AUS) SUMMARY: In the wake of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's death, the Iraqi Ministerial Committee on National Security (MCNS) agreed to implement the Baghdad Security Plan beginning June 13 and to follow up with a series of speeches and press events by senior GOI officials and others in support of the plan and national unity. The MCNS also agreed to enact a vehicle ban in Baghdad and Baquba (capital of Diyala Province, where Zarqawi was killed) during Friday prayers on June 9, in anticipation of possible VBIED threat. MCNS also agreed on a three-day curfew in Baqubah and emphasized the need for equally aggressive security measures in Diyala and Basrah Provinces. FM Zebari informed the committee of his upcoming visit to the UN to support continuation of UNSCR 1637, the review for which he said would be routine and uncomplicated. The committee rejected a suggestion to put the UNSCR 1637 issue first before the Iraqi parliament for debate, accepting instead the PM's compromise to inform key political party leaders of the review on June 10 (the day before Zebari's departure). GEN Casey offered to discuss with the same leaders a conditions-based roadmap of Coalition forces in Iraq to help allay concerns. END SUMMARY.

12. (S//REL GBR AUS) PM Nuri al-Maliki convened the MCNS at his office the evening of June 8. Present for the Iraqis were DPM Salam al-Zawbai; Minister of Finance (and former Minister of Interior) Bayan Jabr; National Security Advisor Dr. Mowaffak al-Rubaie; new Minister of Defense Abdul Qadr Mohammed Jasim; new Minister of Interior Jawad al-Bolani; and Chief of Staff Dr. Abdul Aziz al-Tamimi. Present for the Coalition were the Ambassador; MNF-I Commanding General Casey; and British Ambassador Patey.

SECURITY MEASURES

13. (S//REL GBR AUS) The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the current security situation and next steps in the wake of Zarqawi's death. Although committee members were concerned about terrorist reprisals, the only specific intelligence information was regarding a possible terrorist plan to send seven VBIEDs from Diyala Province to Baghdad on Friday, June 19.

14. (S//REL GBR AUS) After discussing possible security measures, the MCNS unanimously agreed on the need to implement the Baghdad Security Plan (also known as Operation Forward Together) on schedule beginning June 13. The Committee also approved a timeline, prepared by Dr. Rubaie,

to implement the plan. The timeline contains recommended political and public affairs activities to support the operation, beginning with the PM's address on Operation Forward Together and national unity to Parliament on June 17.

These are to be followed by speeches and press events by the PM, National Security Advisor, Presidency Council, religious leaders, and Ministers of Defense and Interior the following week.

15. (S//REL GBR AUS) The MCNS decided to enact a vehicle ban in Baghdad and Baqubah on June 9 around Friday prayer time (11am-3pm) to avoid car bomb threats. GEN Casey said he believes that the current configuration of security forces in Baghdad could handle seven VBIED threats and that a vehicle ban or curfew may disrupt the populace unnecessarily. Nonetheless, the Committee adopted the vehicle ban, which the Interior Minister was tapped to announce. The MCNS also approved putting Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) on heightened alert for the following 72 hours.

16. (S//REL GBR AUS) Many members of the Committee also stressed the importance of balancing the Baghdad plan with equally strong security measures in Diyala Province and Basrah. The Committee therefore agreed to impose a curfew in Baqubah to begin Friday night from 8pm-6am for three consecutive days. New Defense Minister Abdul Qadir stressed the importance of taking the offensive in Diyala and urged that military forces implement the Diyala plan soon after the Baghdad Plan is launched. The Committee reaffirmed the importance of executing the Basrah Security Plan as established (reftel).

17. (S//REL GBR AUS) As in the June 5 MCNS meeting, DPM Zawbai ranted about how he had been left out of discussions on the Baghdad Plan and that Sunni views need to be heard. After a

several minutes-long, the PM cut Zawbai off by noting that Zawbai had been present at all meetings and therefore has no cause for complaint. Moreover, the PM added, Zawbai's eloquence in speechmaking could be put to good use in the Baghdad Security Plan's public presentations.

UNSCR 1637 REVIEW

18. (S//REL GBR AUS) FM Zebari raised the issue of the UN Security Council's review of UNSCR 1637. Zebari said he would attend the session in New York and present Iraq's views on the need for continued Coalition, DFI, and IAMB presence. The review procedure is routine and uncomplicated, Zebari explained, but he would have to answer questions from Security Council members. Zebari recommended that a letter be sent from the Minister of Defense to the Security Council President regarding persistent terrorist threats in Iraq and insufficient Iraqi security forces to cope with the threats. A brief discussion on whether the Council of Representatives (CoR) should first debate the issue ensued, but Zebari noted there was no time to do so before the UN deadline of June 15.

All agreed on a PM compromise to inform political coalition leaders of the review on June 10, the day before Zebari was to leave on June 11. GEN Casey also offered to discuss with the leaders a conditions-based roadmap of the Coalition forces in Iraq if it would help allay concerns.

KHALILZAD